

012

T H E

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL

J O U R N A L.

VOL. VI.]

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 1832.

[NO. 20.

POISONING WITH COLCHICUM.

DAVID COLE, at. 44, a stout, muscular man, feeling pains in his bowels, to which he was subject, about six o'clock in the morning of the 8th of March last, swallowed, believing it to be rum, about two oz. of wine of the seeds of colchicum. He immediately discovered his error, but, knowing its effects in a small dose, conceived it would be followed by vomiting and purging sufficient to avert mischief. He sought no medical advice until four in the afternoon, when I first saw him. He was sitting in a chair, his elbows on his knees, and told me that he felt no inconvenience for an hour and a half after taking the dose, when pains in the bowels came on, but that he continued his labor until eleven o'clock, when pains in his stomach and bowels, retching, and copious vomiting of a yellowish fluid, compelled him to desist.

Four o'clock, P. M.—He describes the pain in the epigastrium as agonizing, and says it is like a knife piercing him. The retching is incessant, and extremely violent, but no fluid is evacuated; there is tenesmus; a small quantity only of faecal matter has passed. No tenderness upon pressure, either in the epigastrium or abdomen. The appearance of the tongue is natural; the pulse small, slow, and feeble; breathing not much affected; the feet cold. His countenance is anxious; features sharp; his cheeks, lips, and palpebrae, purple. Upon attempting to walk, says he thinks he shall lose the use of his limbs. A mustard emetic was given, followed by copious draughts of warm water and gruel. These were soon returned, with apparently no mixture. Cathartic medicine was given, and immediately returned. Was put to bed; warm bricks were applied to the feet, and hot flannels to the stomach. To take forty drops of laudanum immediately; gruel and coffee plenteously.

Nine o'clock, P. M.—The retching, vomiting, and pain in the stomach, continue with undiminished violence; the fluid vomited contains a sediment like coffee-grounds; very thirsty; has made little water. Twenty drops of laudanum every two hours; a blister to the epigastrium; sinapisms to the feet; an enema every hour.

9th.—Six o'clock, A. M.—Has passed a sleepless night; the symptoms remain unaltered. The eyes are sunk; the feet warmer; skin generally natural; no perspiration; pulse scarcely to be felt; respiration hurried; great thirst; no urine. Enemata returned without faecal mat-

ter.—Camphor, calomel, and opium, every three hours ; an effervescent draught, with brandy, every hour.

Eight o'clock, P. M.—The retchings and pains continued until four o'clock, when the bowels were much distended. Has since had copious liquid stools, dark colored, and very offensive, and expresses himself better. Makes a few drops only of urine ; loses his sight for a minute or two after getting out of bed to the night-chair. The pulse is scarcely perceptible, and occasionally intermits. He is perfectly sensible, but talks with effort ; calls continually for water.—Aromatic confection, carbonate of ammonia and camphor mixture, with brandy, every hour.

10th.—In the course of the night his stools passed involuntarily, and in great numbers ; his weakness increased, and he died a few minutes before five o'clock this morning, perfectly sensible to the last moment.

Sectio Cadaveris.—The face, neck, upper and front part of the thorax, insides of the arms, front of each fore-arm, and the insides of the thighs, were covered with patches of a purple efflorescence, as were also the integuments of the scrotum and penis. The muscles of the fore-arm were very rigid, and their fibres contracted into hard knobs. The great omentum, instead of covering the front of the intestines, was turned up between the stomach and convex surface of the liver behind, and the diaphragm in front, from the efforts of vomiting. There was increased redness in a portion of the peritoneum covering the jejunum. The stomach and bowels were covered with a thick, tenacious, but colorless mucus. On a portion of the mucous membrane of the stomach, near the cardiac orifice, and corresponding to its great arch, was a patch of redness about the size of a half-crown piece ; its secretion here did not vary in tenacity, quantity, or color, from that of any other portion of the membrane. Upon dividing it at this part, its section presented nothing beyond its usual appearance ; there was no pulpiness, no thickening, but a small quantity of blood was effused between it and the muscular coat, giving reddened internal appearance. Careful examination of that portion of the reddened peritoneum covering the jejunum demonstrated the like hemorrhagic condition of the bloodvessels. Blood was effused between the peritoneal and muscular coats, but the mucous membrane corresponding to this portion was perfectly healthy—at least it was perfectly free from inflammation. No other trace of inflammation was observed in any other portion of the abdominal viscera. The gall-bladder was distended with healthy bile : the urinary bladder was contracted and empty.

The pleura costales were much reddened. The lungs were of a most beautiful purple color externally, did not crepitate, and were gorged with black blood, which had become effused, underneath the pleura pulmonales, in spots of various sizes ; these were very numerous about their roots and edges.

The pericardium contained no fluid, nor was it reddened ; yet numbers of ecchymosed spots were observed in that portion of it attached to the central tendon of the diaphragm, and also thickly interspersed upon the surface of the heart itself, more especially about the centre of the coronary vessels. Heart flabby, and easily broken down. The cavæ,

the right auricle and ventricle, and the pulmonary artery, were filled with black blood, partly coagulated, partly fluid ; the left auricle and ventricle empty.

I regret that neither my own entreaties nor the influence of the coroner were sufficient to obtain permission to examine the head. So little were the functions of the brain disturbed during life, that it is probable no other diseased appearance would have been observed, save a participation of its sinuses in the distention of the right side of the heart.

The deleterious effects of the bulb of colchicum are said to depend, in a great measure, upon the season of the year when it is collected ; but the seeds matured only in the spring must possess uniform properties.

Colchicum is classed, by most writers, as an acrid or rubefacient poison ; and poisons of this class are defined as producing inflammation when applied to the intestinal canal, and, if taken in sufficient quantity, the same effects as the corrosive. No such effects, however, followed its exhibition in this case ; for, in addition to the want of the usual post-mortem appearance of inflammation, I consider the patches of redness, in the stomach and peritoneum, too partial for inflammation from such a cause. The jejunum, too, possesses a singular immunity from disease, as is shown by the quotation of Andral's table, in Macintosh's Practice of Physic. The hæmorrhagic condition of the system, observed here, accords with the observations of Dr. A. Thomson, published at p. 281 of the Lancet for 1831, who says, that colchicum has an effect of producing effusion of blood from all the mucous tissues, the skin alone excepted, and that a peculiar laxity is observable in the cellular membrane, producing a diminution, if not total destruction, of its adhesive powers. The purple efflorescence of the skin, the effusions of blood between the coats of the stomach and the jejunum, and underneath the pleura and the pericardium, in this case, all prove the accuracy of these remarks. I feel satisfied that not the slightest inflammation existed in either of the above-mentioned structures ; for, with respect to the stomach and bowel, where redness was perceptible, the mucous membrane was unchanged in structure ; there was neither pulpiness nor thickening, nor did it present a more vascular section than other portions of the membrane : a very important observation, too, its secretion was not changed in quantity or consistence. With respect to the lungs, it was difficult to trace, or rather distinguish, either bloodvessels or bronchiæ ; a section of them seemed more like the section of a clot of venous blood, so greatly were they congested with black blood. The state of the breathing during life bore no kind of proportion to this appearance.

Colchicum is also classed as a poison acting upon the nervous system by absorption, and, through this medium, exerting a peculiar influence on the arterial circulation ; and this appears to be its true modus operandi. Sir Everard Home found, by direct experiment,* that its effects were the same, whether taken into the stomach or introduced into the jugular vein, only that, in the latter case, its effects were more quickly developed than in the former, and hence he concludes that its action

* Philosophical Transactions for 1816, p. 257.

upon the different parts of the body is through the medium of the circulation, and not from its *immediate* effects upon the stomach and intestines. The *prima via* have been frequently, and perhaps generally, found inflamed, where colchicum has been taken in large quantities ; but this is no proof of its *direct* effects upon them, since arsenic will produce inflammation there (the stomach and bowels) when applied to the external surface of the body ! * Sir Everard Home found that colchicum reduced the pulse in all cases where it was ordinarily used, and this is a material help in enabling us to trace the order in which the three great functions of the body are severally affected by it. It would seem that the heart is deprived of nervous energy, and in consequence beats feebly. Now, by the natural process of inspiration, the trachea and bronchiæ, with their minute ramifications, together with the air-cells, are distended with atmospheric air—an elastic fluid. At the standard of health, the heart contracts with a force probably three hundred times greater than the force exerted by the pressure of the air in the lungs, and the blood, instead of being impeded, flows more freely ; hence the important connexion between the circulating and respiratory functions. We have seen that colchicum, in an ordinary dose, depresses the heart's action. What must then be expected to follow the administration of a dose like that in question ? for it does not appear to be one of those remedies, the principle of whose action is altered by its dose ! The action of the heart is almost paralyzed ; it can no longer overbalance the pressure exerted by the air in the lungs ; the blood can no longer be propelled as usual through their vessels ; congestion takes place in the veins ; the blood is unarterialized (and, whether its exposure to the action of the fibrillæ of the ganglial system of nerves, in its passage through the arteries, has any influence in effecting this essential change, the lungs are not able to exert their necessary preparatory action), and unarterialized blood gradually destroys the action of every part through which it circulates. The organs of digestion, assimilation, circulation, and secretion, were severally deranged in function, whilst the intellectual and locomotive powers were little affected. This proves the great extent to which the sympathetic or ganglial system of nerves was affected, and the almost immunity of the cerebro-spinal system.

It must be obvious that no treatment in this case held out any hope of the patient's recovery. When first I saw him, he had swallowed the dose ten hours, when time had been allowed, over and over again, for it to enter the circulation. An emetic, or stomach-pump, employed before this had taken place, would have dislodged it, and probably have saved his life.

Since poisons act in so many different ways upon the animal economy, some primarily, through the medium of the nerves, without being absorbed, producing death by suffocation from paralysis of the respiratory muscles, or by syncope—others by entering the circulation, and exerting their influence on the heart, brain, and alimentary canal—others through the same medium on the spinal marrow, and, lastly, others having a purely local action on the mucous membrane of the alimentary

* Parry's *Pharmacologia*, sixth edition, Vol. I., p. 248.

canal—and since this difference in their physiological actions renders a plan of treatment safe and justifiable in some instances, which would be followed by the most tragic effects in others, it behoves us to be aware of the order of the parts of the system through which they exert their influence ; for, as each has its own modus operandi, it is by a knowledge of this only, that we can arrive at scientific and safe indications of cure. Magendie, for instance, found that a state of depletion facilitated absorption, but that a state of congestion impeded it. How important a knowledge of this fact is in the successful treatment of two familiar poisons—arsenic and corrosive sublimate ! Dr. Paris has classed the former with those poisons which produce their effects by absorption—the latter with those having a purely local or corrosive action. Both are followed by inflammation of the *prime viæ*; yet the experiments of Magendie teach us, that, if we deplete to subdue the inflammatory symptoms when arsenic has been taken, so long as any portion of it remains in the stomach and bowels, we necessarily hasten death by promoting its absorption. On the contrary, corrosive sublimate, having a local action, and not being absorbed, needs no such precaution : we may bleed from the outset.

The same principle is applicable to the poison of *colchicum*. It produces its effects by absorption. We should, therefore, be very cautious how we bleed, to subdue any inflammatory action of the stomach and bowels, until the poison has been completely ejected from them.

Dudley, April 19th, 1832.

THOMAS FEREDAY.

DISEASES OF NEW HAVEN.

Observations on the Diseases which prevailed in New Haven, Conn., during the Winter of 1831-2. By V. M. Dow, M.D.

Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

ABOUT the 15th November, the weather suddenly set in severely cold and boisterous, and continued so for a full month without interruption, the earth's surface being covered with snow during nearly the whole time. The two succeeding months, on the contrary, presented nearly every variety of weather of which our winters are susceptible in this latitude, and were remarkable only for irregularity and sudden vicissitudes. Immediately on the commencement of winter, cases of *catarrhus epidemicus*, *rubeola*, and *pneumonitis*, began to present themselves. Cases of *scarlatina* were also frequent during the winter, though not more so than during the summer previous.

Influenza, or Epidemic Catarrh.—Making its appearance simultaneously with the sudden arrival of cold weather, this disease was naturally enough considered, by the vulgar, as an effect of this atmospheric peculiarity ; while by others, more philosophic, it was attributed to an unusual *dryness* of the air, which was demonstrated to obtain, during the first month at least of the epidemic, to such a degree that the air, during this period, contained only about half its usual supply of watery vapor.

This latter circumstance might, with much apparent plausibility, be admitted as the cause of influenza, had we never known of its having existed independently of it. But, if we turn our attention to the same epidemic as it appeared in England, we shall find that it commenced there in the month of June last—a month, according to accounts from that country, “remarkable only for a high temperature, a singular humidity of the air, a soft wind from the south-west, and a bright, hot summer’s sun,” the thermometer generally ranging from 60 degrees to 75 degrees, Fahr. If we contrast this description with that of the first thirty days from the commencement of the epidemic in New Haven—the weather suddenly becoming unusually cold, boisterous, and stormy, with northerly winds, and, instead of humidity, with a remarkable dryness and sharpness of the air—and if we consider that, notwithstanding all the diversity of the season, the epidemic presented substantially the same features in both places, we shall be compelled to place very little credit to the agency of the atmosphere in causing this disease.

In China it was noticed in the month of January, 1830; in Manilla, in September, 1830; in France, in May and June, 1831; in England, in June and July, 1831, and in the United States it prevailed chiefly in December and January, 1831-2.

This wide-spreading epidemic, which has so often traversed the habitable globe, has, in its different visitations, appeared so uniformly in the same garb, and been so often and well described, that it is scarcely necessary to enumerate its symptoms. Suffice it to observe, that, in its late return, it wore the same characteristic marks that it had done previously. The catarrhal affection was attended by the same fullness and pain of the head; the same languor, oppression, and anxiety at the precordia; the same quick, contracted, half-suppressed pulse; the same dense, white, short fur on the tongue, and the same anorexia, sometimes amounting to nausea. Efflorescent patches, appearing to the eye like erysipelas, but with more accurately defined margins, suddenly making their appearance, and as suddenly vanishing or shifting to some other part of the skin, were observed in several cases, especially of children. Contrary to what has usually been observed of influenza, children were not exempt from it during the past winter. One infant whom I attended was only ten days old, while great numbers had the disease at the age of a few weeks or a few months. In fact, the disease not unfrequently proved fatal to infants who had it, while it was not attended with danger to those from two years of age upwards.

In treating the disease, bloodletting was rarely resorted to, as it seemed not indicated by the pulse or other symptoms. A few doses of calomel, of five or eight grains each, by itself or combined with Dover’s powder, given at intervals of twenty-four hours, exerted the best effect in restoring the natural secretions of the alimentary canal, and was the only active medicinie usually required. Expectorants and mucilages were of some use, and, in the latter stages of the disease, wine and alcohol were sometimes useful.

Rubcola.—Never was this disease more prevalent in this city than during the past winter. It appeared about the same time with the influ-

enza, and, as it had not visited us for several years previous, it found a vast many obnoxious to its attack. It is even doubtful which of these two diseases may have produced the greater number of patients. Besides children, a great many adults suffered from it—many who had lived through successive epidemics of measles with impunity—and such were much more severely affected by it than children.* Infants at the breast more often escaped an attack of measles than those of any other age; it being often the case, that, of several children in the same family and same room, all would have the disease except the infant. A similar immunity was also enjoyed by infants in relation to scarlet fever, during the same period, though there were exceptions, of course, in both cases. The disease appeared in its usual form, was rather unusually intense, but not malignant, nor yet so benign as it is often witnessed. In proof of its benignity, it is sufficient to remark, that most of the cases terminated favorably, even where no medical aid was called, and, what is still more remarkable, under a kind of domestic management the very worst that could have been devised. This remarkable method of treating measles consists in keeping the patient hot in bed, and plying him with all manner of stimulants internally, from the first appearance of the catarrhal affection until he gets well or dies, or until the good dames think he will die, when they usually call a physician. Treated in this manner, it is only remarkable that a greater number of cases did not terminate in bronchitis, phrenitis, or pneumonitis. But it is all done with the intention, in the first place, of bringing out the eruption, and, in the second place, of keeping it out. In fact, a great many cases of influenza were treated in the same way, for a week together, on the supposition that they were measles, and with quite as much propriety as if they had been measles. The first symptoms of measles and those of an attack of influenza, as it appeared in children, so exactly simulated each other, that they could not in all cases be distinguished in the early stage of the complaints. In some cases, the two diseases actually co-existed in the same patient, one having taken the lead for several days, or a week, or even a longer time. Now it scarcely need be observed, that, as respects the management to be adopted in a given case, under the eye of a physician, it matters not a whit whether the case be measles or influenza, or whether it should be called lung fever, or the rattles, or the phthisic; since the disease must be treated for what it is, and not according to what it may be called.

On the whole, those cases did best which were subjected to a moderately antiphlogistic treatment, though severe cases of adults often required free depletion by venesection. In the few cases which proved fatal, death was usually the result of bronchitis or pneumonitis, superinduced upon the measles by hot regimen and stimulants, or allowed to take place by not adopting an opposite plan of treatment sufficiently early.

Pneumonitis, of which we generally see specimens every winter, was, during the last, rather more rife than usual. Its accompanying fever was usually a synochus, but few cases being sufficiently entonic to require bloodletting. Its symptoms, during the first two or three days from the

* This circumstance was remarkable also in this city and vicinity.—*Ed.*

attack, were often well calculated to mislead in forming a diagnosis. One case, for instance, came on with severe pain of the head, succeeded by delirium : another was ushered in with obstinate vomiting and extreme irritability of stomach ; while other cases commenced with severe pain in a limb, or some other part of the body foreign to the lungs. Two, three, or even four days frequently elapsed, with one or other of the above affections, before any pneumonic symptoms made their appearance. After the regular symptoms had come on, the pain and disease would, in many cases, shift from one lung to the opposite, on or about the fifth day. That the *disease* shifted as well as the pain, appeared evident by auscultation. At or about this period, we usually observed symptoms of a crisis, which, in severe cases, were often deceptive, and not unfrequently followed by worse symptoms than had before been present. The sputa were always more or less bloody, and it was observed that those recovered soonest, and encountered the least hazard, who expectorated the most blood.

A remarkable disparity between the frequency of the pulse and that of the respiration was also observable ; probably it always exists in this disease, but is not sufficiently noticed by authors. In health, there are four pulsations of the artery to one respiration ; and, in fevers not affecting the lungs particularly, although the frequency of the pulse may be increased to 110 or 130, the respiration will be found to be also increased in frequency to a degree very exactly corresponding. But in pneumonitis we often find the pulse beating but twice or three times during a respiration. This disproportionate frequency of respiration evidently indicates diminished capacity of the lungs, in consequence of some portion of these organs having become more or less impermeable to air. Attention to the degree of frequency of respiration, compared by the convenient standard of the pulse, affords us no mean information of the extent of the injury suffered by the lungs, or of how great a proportion of these organs has become inactive.

In the few cases which terminated fatally, autopsic examinations presented engorgement or hepatization of considerable portions of the pulmonary tissue, and rarely some slight adhesions.

The treatment consisted in the pretty free use of blood root, given in doses short of producing either nausea or narcosis ; in administering antimony and calomel in alterative doses ; in blistering, diaphoretics of Dover's powder, &c. Bleeding was sometimes useful at the outset, but rarely was required to be repeated. Cathartics were almost daily necessary, as the bowels were unusually torpid, and surcharged with bilious matter.

Scarlatina, which had existed more or less in this region for several years, with occasional intermissions, seemed somewhat modified during the past winter. Frequent cases of it appeared during this period, but they seemed less typhoid, and had less tendency to gangrene, no foetor of the breath being observable, even where the throat was ulcerated. The eruption was more in form of minute papulæ, than in that of the broadly-diffused erythematic patches so often observed.

Was this modification of scarlatina owing to the coldness of the atmos-

sphere acting as a remedial agent, or to the prevalence of the different epidemic constitution, which brought with it measles, influenza, &c.?

Some few of the cases were benefited by venesection. One patient I bled the second time with advantage. Generally, however, it was sufficient to give one or more emetics of ipecac., procure daily discharges from the bowels, apply ammoniated liniment to the throat externally, and use astringent or acid gargles. At the end of the first week, infusion of bark and snakeroot, with a little wine, were allowed, and these were all the stimulants and tonics necessary.

Cholera.—Not the least peculiarity attending the diseases of the past winter, was an extraordinary tendency to disorders of the first passages. Cases of cholera biliosa were nearly, if not quite, as frequent as they usually are during the months of July and August. In some, obstinate vomiting would come on and continue several days, and be stayed at last by a full dose or two of calomel, to act as a cathartic. In others, the derangement of the alimentary canal showed itself in form of bilious colic, or in form of bilious diarrhoea. But, whatever were the symptoms by which this gastric and intestinal derangement showed itself, it was always to be met successfully by free doses of cathartics, of which calomel, alone or in combination, stood pre-eminent. In short, this peculiar disturbance of the stomach and bowels showed itself more or less in all of the other diseases before mentioned. In all of them, an unusual demand for cathartics was indicated, and these required to be repeated almost daily, to eliminate the ill-conditioned, fetid, and black sordes. It was even surprising, in some cases, to witness, after ever so free an evacuation of the bowels, how speedily the latter would again become surcharged with vitiated secretions, and call for further evacuants.

None of the above diseases seem to have been unusually severe or malignant, nor was the proportion of fatal cases greater, compared with the whole number attacked with disease, than in ordinary seasons. But there were an unusually large number of persons attacked. From a record of deaths kept in this city, the mortality for the months of December, January, February, and March last, was just about double the average number for the twelve preceding months.

New Haven, June 18th, 1832.

BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, JUNE 27, 1832.

THE CHOLERA.

We cannot but commend in high terms the vigilance and discretion exercised by our City Government in devising and executing measures to prevent, if possible, the introduction of this pestilence into our borders,

and still more to prepare the city for its reception. By a thorough purification of every house, street, lane, alley, and yard—by presenting to every family the most effectual means of protecting its members from the disease, should it come, and urging on them a rigid observance of local and personal neatness, mental equanimity, and temperance in eating, drinking, and all things else, they do all that can be done by the powers with which they are invested.* Nor should we pass over, without notice, the liberality of the Common Council, who have, by a unanimous vote, placed at the disposal of the health officers the sum of fifty thousand dollars, for the purposes of their appointment.

We proposed last week to enter more in detail respecting the mode of meeting the disease on its access. Since then, the Consulting Physicians of the City have offered a report to the government, which contains so much good counsel in a short space, that we shall offer it as a substitute for any further remarks on the subject—all that is left for the physician to do being to follow up the same principles of treatment, varying it according to the symptoms of each case. The free use of the carbonate of soda, in doses of 3*i.*, frequently repeated, has been found very serviceable in some cases of this disease. The REPORT was in the following terms :—

The Consulting Physicians of the City of Boston, having been requested by the Mayor and Aldermen to prepare some instructions for the relief of persons attacked with the Asiatic Cholera, before medical advice can be obtained, and also for the prevention of this disease, report as follows :—

There are two kinds of the cholera cases—one excessively severe and sudden in its attack, the other comparatively mild. The former requires the immediate use of remedies; the latter may wait the attendance and advice of a physician.

The symptoms of the violent form are great coldness, dizziness, sickness of the stomach and vomiting; diarrhoea, small watery discharges, violent cramps in every part, and a livid color of the body.

The following remedies should be used directly, when the symptoms occur :—

1st. Give for an adult 50 drops of laudanum, in a wine glass of hot brandy and water,† equal parts of each, and repeat it every 15 minutes, until four doses have been taken, so as to give, in the whole, 200 drops; if thrown up, repeat the laudanum in a teaspoonfull of brandy.

2d. Apply bags of hot sand to every part of the body and limbs of the patient. Large woollen cloths, wrung out of very hot water, may be applied in the same way, provided they are kept from cooling.

3d. Make a poultice or paste of common mustard, mixed in the same way as for ordinary use; apply this hot over the whole surface of the bowels.

4th. Give an injection made with a gill of starch, arrowroot, or gruel, with one teaspoonfull of laudanum in it.

* In connection with this subject, we would notice and recommend, for universal use, a small machine called a "Stench Trap," by which every family, at a very trifling expense, may entirely exclude from their premises any effluvia from drains and sewers. They are affixed to sinks, and may be had of J. G. Loring, in Merrimac Street.

† We should prefer lommeade to water, if readily obtained.—ED.

Milder Form of the Disease.—This is often preceded by a looseness of the bowels and sickness at the stomach. When these symptoms come on, the patient should omit the use of solid food, and take as little as possible into the stomach. A proper nourishment in this state is arrow-root or rice water. For drink, small quantities of pure water* or tea.

The patient should keep in bed. If the bowels have not been freely emptied, an even dose of powdered rhubarb may be given. This is to be followed by an injection, every four hours, of half a pint of flaxseed tea, with twenty drops of laudanum in each. The surface of the bowels should be blistered. If the patient is much exhausted, a teaspoonfull of tinct. of cinnamon, in half a wineglassfull of hot water, may be given, once in half an hour, for three or four times.

Means of Prevention.—Cleanliness, domestic and personal, is of the first importance in the prevention of cholera. Every house and shop, especially provision stalls, should be made clean and sweet. Outhouses should be freed from all offensive matter. Cellars, especially, should be cleared of putrid vegetables, ventilated, and thoroughly dried. Beds and bed clothing should be daily exposed to currents of fresh air.

Personal cleanliness must be carefully attended to. Those who can do so should, in hot weather, bathe in sea water two or three times a week, and others should wash the whole body with warm water and soap at least twice a week. Children should not be omitted in this process. As few individuals as possible should live in the same room; and, where a number are found together, means for dividing and giving them more healthy lodgments should be provided at the public expense.

Crowded meetings, especially in the evening, should be avoided.

Food.—In a disorder which affects the stomach and intestines, all attempts at prevention would be useless, without a most strict attention to food. A fact, established by the experience of all Europe and Asia, is, that the "cholera attacks the tippler," and makes him his first victim. A little excess, even in wine, exposes to the disease. Liquids of all kinds should be moderately used. The safest are common tea, and teas made of domestic herbs, taken warm. Acid drinks are pernicious. Cold water, if pure, may be taken in moderate quantity, but, when the weather is hot and the thirst great, the mouth, the hands, and the face, should be previously washed.

Excess of solid food is a sure preparation for the disease. The best articles of food are bread, eggs, fresh meat, fresh fish, and rice. Perfectly good and thoroughly boiled vegetables stand next, as potatoes, asparagus, etc. All uncooked vegetables, as salads, are dangerous. Fruits, unless very fine, had better be avoided. Strawberries, taken by themselves, or with the addition of a little wine, are the least likely to do mischief. Pastry, preserves, and pickles, scarcely need be mentioned as requiring a total prohibition. All unusual fatigue and exercise, exposure to cold, wet, and to the night air, should be avoided. The dress should be carefully regulated according to the changes of temperature. Flannel next to the skin is universally recommended, and to those of a more delicate habit is indispensable.

What we have already said on the subject of ventilation, will make it sufficiently understood that we believe the pure air of the country to be more salutary, during the hot season, than that of a large town. While,

* This article is with difficulty obtained in this place. The water of the aqueduct is to be preferred, unless perfectly sweet rain water is to be had.

therefore, it is not indispensable to flee the city on the appearance of the cholera, and while we doubt not it will pursue a different course from the yellow fever, and infect the country if it does the town, we should advise those who have the means of selecting their residence, to quit the frequented walks of men, and seek retirement and sequestration during the prevalence of the epidemic.

Finally, we recommend a good conscience, and a fearless performance of duty, as the best of all preservatives against this disorder. It is well known to physicians, that the most timid are most frequently the subjects of epidemic diseases. This is peculiarly the case with cholera, because it affects the nervous system. We therefore strongly urge on our fellow citizens a perfect confidence in the wisdom and goodness of God, and a full assurance that those who perform His will, by the devotion of their labors to the sick and suffering, are taking the surest means to escape the attack of this disease.

Signed,

JOHN C. WARREN,

BENJAMIN SHUTTLEFF,

GEORGE C. SHATTUCK,

GEORGE HAYWARD,

JOHN RANDALL.

MASSACHUSETTS REPORT ON CHOLERA.

THE committee appointed by the Counsellors of the Massachusetts Medical Society, to report on the subject of the cholera, have published the result of their labors at a fortunate moment, and we have perused it with the greatest satisfaction. It appears to contain a summary of all that is at present known respecting the several points of the disease, and is drawn up with great care, ability, and impartiality. The committee have taken the part not of an advocate, but of a judge, and their report is a lucid charge, presenting, in a clear and unprejudiced manner, all the important evidence now before the public, respecting the nature, history, treatment, &c., of the disease, and leaving the profession to form their opinions on this evidence. We hope the circulation of this report will not be limited to the fellows of the Society; it is decidedly the best production on the subject we have yet seen, and should be in the possession of every member of the faculty, and studied with fidelity and confidence.

No room is allowed us at present for a notice of the views presented by the committee. Reserving their minds open to the influence of the further testimony which will be developed during the future course of the disease, they have not shrunk from a proper expression of the conclusions to be drawn, from the history of the disease, respecting the disputed point of contagion. *So far as present evidence goes*, they incline to the belief, that the preponderance is in favor of the contagiousness of the disease, or its capability of being communicated by the sick to the well, but that its virus or miasm is not capable of being conveyed, certainly to any great distance, by means of merchandise, excepting,

perhaps, the immediate clothing of the sick. On this subject of contagion, however, the committee do not deem the past history of the pestilence sufficiently full to warrant a very decided opinion; but the evidence they have adduced in support of its contagiousness is very strong, and appears to us to be unanswerable.

Up to June 18th, the time of our last advices, there had been in Montreal 1635 cases, 312 deaths, and, during the last twenty-four hours, 431 new cases, and 82 deaths. At Quebec there are appearances of an abatement in the malignity of the disease. At Plattsburgh there have been 7 cases of disease supposed to be cholera, and 4 deaths; but we trust it may turn out to be some less dreaded malady.

We acknowledge the valuable communications of Professor Tully, and defer the commencement of their publication until next week, as it is desirable that the whole should appear in the same "Monthly Part" of the Journal.—The essay on Contagion, from another esteemed correspondent, was received too late for this number.

Monthly Notice of New Publications.

An Introduction to the Study of Human Anatomy. By JAMES PAXTON, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, &c., with Illustrations. First American Edition, with Additions by WINSLOW LEWIS, jr., M.D., Demonstrator of Anatomy to the Medical Department of Harvard University.

We noticed, some weeks since, the appearance of Mr. PAXTON's work on Anatomy, and expressed it as our opinion, that a reprint here, well executed, would be both popular and useful, and would prove a safe, if not a profitable enterprise. It gave us much pleasure to hear that the task of preparing an American edition had fallen into such able hands as those of Dr. LEWIS, and we had no doubt that, under his judicious direction and care, it would be rendered the most useful manual of anatomy among us. We are not disappointed in the result. The text is in many instances remodeled and improved, and several new remarks, of considerable value, are added. As respects the mechanical execution of the work, it is sufficient praise to say, that the excellent arrangement of the plates in the English edition is strictly retained, and that both the typography and the engraving will very fairly sustain a comparison with that of the foreign work. The latter, indeed, deserves particular mention, both for its intrinsic merit, and for having been executed by a native young artist who is but little known to the public. Some of the plates are even better executed than the English, and the clearness of the references is admirably preserved. As an elementary book for students, and particularly for those who commence their studies without having within their reach any

facilities for dissection, it is incomparably the best treatise with which we are acquainted, and it will not fail to afford a most convenient work of reference to those who, amidst the engagements of active practice, have little opportunity for pursuing minute anatomical researches, but will find it desirable to refresh their memories, from time to time, in regard to the leading and prominent facts in the science. By practitioners in the country, it will in this way be found extremely convenient and useful. In fine, we do not hesitate to express our conviction, that it is only necessary for the value of the work to be generally known, in order to secure it a place in the library of every physician.

Outlines of the Science of Life, which treats Physiologically of both Body and Mind. Designed only for Philosophers, and other Candid Persons. To which are added, Essays on other Subjects. By ELISHA NORTH, M.D., Member of the Connecticut Medical Society, &c.

DR. NORTH is a close and vigorous disputant; his work is marked by a spirit of independence, and, if it does not contain much that is absolutely new, exhibits some new views of the subjects he discusses, and some nervous reasoning. His fundamental principle is, that the phenomena of life are the result of organization, and that those of sensation and reflection, belonging to those of life, require no aid of an immaterial soul in order to explain their production. There are, according to him, six agents in vital powers, perpetually acting within every one, to occasion life. These are—1, atmospheric pressure; 2, caloric; 3, vital steam; 4, oxygen; 5, light; 6, electricity. These powers, and likewise organization, are maintained by solid and liquid food and by the blood, by external heat, light, and electricity.

The property of sensation and volition is occasioned by the united action of sensitive, solid, and fluid matter, and the sentient spirit, aided by caloric, &c., which spirit is perpetually generated from the circulating blood. One of the main distinctions between plants and animals is, that the living matter of the former is irritable merely, while the latter possesses both irritable and sensitive matter. The nisus formativus, or restorative power, is common to both. The united configuration of a suitable quantity of the organic spirit of the brain, and the fluid and fleshy substance of that organ or sensitive matter, and the organs of sense, are necessary to the production of sensation and thought.

The succession of animated beings is accomplished by sexual organs. The male and female semen are both alive, or they possess vital properties, and their sympathetic union occasions a new being, which has the propensities of the parents.

Such is an epitome, nearly in the author's own language, of his views on the cause of life, and of the animal and intellectual functions. It is

to be remarked, that, in this view, the prime mover or maintainer of life, within the system, is the circulation of blood. This, as Dr. N. truly observes, forms a connecting link between the external means of support and the internal operations of the system. The food eaten is converted into blood. The air breathed, and atmospheric pressure, are necessary to the circulation of the blood. The circulating fluid nourishes and repairs the solid organs, and sustains the animal fluids and spirits. Each organ has its peculiar propensity, or nature and function. The animal spirit, or vital steam, and other fluids, are perpetual stimulants, vivifying all the animal organs. Heat and electricity are also constantly operating. Hence it is evident that life is a forced state, &c.

Voluntary motion, then, thought, the faculties and the passions, are functions of human organized matter, and continue to be so while the requisite stimulus or impulse within is furnished by the circulation of the blood, and the necessary motive power from without, is supplied by atmospheric pressure and by caloric. When, from the failure in the part of either, the stimulus ceases to be furnished, the matter in question parts with these properties or loses its vitality.

In giving this brief sketch of the views advanced by Dr. N., it would be unjust not to add, that he disclaims all scepticism with regard to the fundamental doctrines of religious belief. He considers the proof of a future state to rest simply on the evidence of revelation, as given in the scriptures, and thinks that the cause of religion has been injured by attempting to defend it by arguments derived from physiology. Without admitting the truth of this remark, we shall for the present decline any argument on the subject, as it is our intention, at some future period, to take it up at greater length. Those who possess a taste for abstruse speculation, for whose perusal the work is avowedly designed, will find both amusement and instruction in its careful perusal.

A Treatise on Breeding, Rearing, and Fattening all kinds of Poultry, Cows, Swine, and other Domestic Animals. By B. MOUBRAY, Esq. From the Sixth London Edition, with Additions, &c., by T. G. FESSENDEN, Esq. Boston.

This treatise has given us great pleasure. Those of our brethren who reside in the country will also derive from it much practical instruction. The subject it discusses is one that requires much reform among us. Most domestic animals are treated according to former customs, or without much attention or care; but they, as well as plants, are capable of being greatly improved, and rendered more profitable, by an enlightened culture. The mode of effecting this is now laid before the husbandman, by Mr. MOUBRAY, in a very brief, clear, and interesting manner, and the volume is much enhanced in value to the American

cultivator, by the practical additions and alterations of the distinguished editor who prepared the present work for the press. Having ourselves solicited a re-publication of this treatise, we have indulged ourselves in this gratuitous notice of it; for, although not a medical work, it illustrates a subject in which the great body of the profession are more or less interested.

Library of Practical Medicine. Published by order of the Massachusetts Medical Society, for the use of its Fellows. Vol. II. 8vo. pp. 263. Boston.

THE plan of the Medical Society of this state, to publish annually a volume containing some standard treatise on practical subjects, was favorably noticed the last year, when we offered some account of the first volume. That contained Smith and Tweedie's works on Fever. The present contains the Principles of Surgery, by Mr. Pearson, and Abernethy's well known Observations on the Constitutional Origin of Local Diseases, and on Aneurisms. The selection is a happy one. The works of Mr. Abernethy are full of instruction to the medical man, and should be familiar to every one who pretends to pursue an enlightened practice. They are, indeed, already in the library of most physicians in this place, but we shall cheerfully suffer the inconvenience of a duplicate, for the sake of extending the benefits of the work to those who will now receive it for the first time. The treatise of Mr. Pearson is more rare, but no less valuable; and, although it might, from the title, be thought exclusively useful to the Surgeon, it will be found to discuss, concisely and practically, the numerous common diseases, which, though strictly surgical, are always falling under the care of every medical practitioner.

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending June 23, 26. Males, 10—Females, 16—Still-born, 1.

Of consumption, 6—intemperance, 3—dropsy on the heart, 1—Inflammation, 1—measles, 3—old age, 1—scarlet fever, 2—childbed, 2—Inflammation on the lungs, 1—marasmus, 1—lung fever, 2—typhus fever, 1—unknown, 2.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

MECKEL'S ANATOMY, VOL. II.

This day received, by CARTER & HENDEE, corner of Washington and School Streets—Manual of General, Descriptive, and Pathological Anatomy, by J. F. MECKEL, Prof. of Anatomy at Halle, &c. &c. &c. Translated from the German into French, with Additions and Notes by A. J. L. JOURDAN, Member of the Royal Academy of Medicine at Paris, &c. &c. &c., and G. PRESCHET, Adjunct Prof. of Anatomy at the School of Medicine, &c. &c. &c. Translated from the French, with Notes, by A. BURNEY DOANE. June 20.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL

IS PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY, BY CLAPP AND HULL,
At 184 Washington Street, corner of Franklin Street, to whom all communications must be addressed,
Post-paid. It is also published in Monthly Parts, on the 1st of each month, each Part containing the
numbers of the preceding month, stitched in a cover.—Price \$3.00 per annum in advance, \$3.50 if not
paid within six months, and \$4.00 if not paid within the year.—Postage the same as for a newspaper.